

At the foot of the pyramid

By Michael Grant

RAMSAY MACMULLEN:
Roman Social Relations: 50 BC to AD 284.
212pp. Yale University Press. £8.95.

"My aim in this essay," writes Ramsay MacMullen of *Roman Social Relations: 50 BC to AD 284*, "is to get at the feelings that governed the behaviour of broad social groups or conditions." This type of history appeals greatly to the taste of the present age, and understandably so, since most historians of Rome, with obvious exceptions such as Rostovtzeff, have given us too little of it. That is partly, of course, because the ancient writers on whom they so largely rely were, for the most part, less interested in social than in political and military history. In other words, our evidence for ancient social history is thoroughly patchy. MacMullen is very well aware of this. Indeed in huge regions of the empire—the areas west of Ciria in Africa, west of Rome's Alpine provinces—he finds so little material that he prefers to exclude them altogether. He is also aware that social relationships differ markedly in different parts of the Roman world, as well as at different epochs of Roman history. But these sorts of differentiation are "smoothed over" in this essay through "my attempts at general truths." Fair enough, in so short a book: its many successful features and many fruitful lines of thinking justify the method.

One reason why social history is so popular in our class-guilt epoch is the escape it offers from the peculiarly upper-class preoccupations beloved by the ancient senatorial historians. The present writer sees "an almost incredible snobbery" here: stating, with some exaggeration, that "for Tacitus, in certain respects an utter fool, only a few thousands of his own circle really existed." MacMullen, on the other hand, is quite explicit about his own purpose of "extending our

knowledge a little further beyond the upper classes to the lower." But how difficult this is:

The peasant too seldom speaks for himself. We would like to hear him say, "Here is where I live, in these are my feelings towards my neighbours or towards outsiders, such-and-such are the groups in which I feel at home, or depend on, or compete against; my prospects, my condition, my social heritage, are thus-and-so." Instead, what he has left us only brief mentions of the externals of his life, or appears through the eyes of observers quite alien to him: the literate, or rather the literate, classes. They are not likely to have understood the peasant. Though he supported their own cause and cultivation, he was silent, motionless, and far below them as the great torse in which, in Indian mythology, the whole world ultimately rests.

Nevertheless, with the aid of inscriptions and papyri (I should like to have seen more use made of graffiti), MacMullen does his best to reconstruct these amorphous existences. Moreover, it is their inward as well as their external life that he is after; and this aspect of his search, conducted with some passion, "explains the mention, on almost every page that follows, of prejudice, servility, isolation, pride, shame, friendship, indifference, contempt, loyalty, despair, or exclusiveness."

Of the rural population of the empire he gives a vivid and rather terrible picture. Existing very often at the barest subsistence level, lurking in perilous countryside to which the blessings of the Pax Romana scarcely penetrated, they lived only to pass on their children. The Roman world was made up of cities and towns, which felt a hearty contempt (thoroughly documented here) for the yokels who created its largely agricultural economy, yet totally failed to

secure any share of its privileges. MacMullen, who has previously written an important book on those alienated from the Roman order, feels a measure of sympathy for Rostovtzeff's theory that in the country folk took their revenge on the urban population. But as he admits, most other students of the period, while noting with interest the peasant rebellions of the legions in Gaul (which he does not mention in this book), feel that one looks in vain for any substantial class-warfare during this period.

On the other hand there is something to be said for an interpretation of the Zealot movement in the first century AD along these lines, and even more to be said for a similar explanation of the fourth century Circumcellions in North Africa. Here indeed was a situation in which "peasants under the name and banner of religious fanatics dared to take up arms against the wealthy and inflicted a bloody revenge on those from whom, in normal times, they went cap in hand to borrow money or seed corn." But the "normal" times are not frequent; the significant fact is not that these underdeveloped people occasionally rose in revolt, but that they were brought one of them down. They formed—the free poor even more obviously than urban slaves—the vast bottom of an extremely steep social pyramid, which to some extent defies attempts to define its strata in modern terms.

We have at the top of Roman society a quite minute but extraordinarily prominent and rich nobility, itself split into a higher (senatorial) and a lower (equestrian) stratum; at the bottom, a large mass of the totally indigent, mostly free but partly slave; and strung out between the extremes a variety too

heterogeneous to be called in any sense a middle class.

MacMullen is quite right to group the equestrians (knights) with the senators as part of the upper class, instead of calling them "the middle class." He is also justified in describing them as the "lower" section of the upper class. In so far as their required property qualification was lower than that of the senators. However, these knights were extraordinarily diversified, many of them being landowners scarcely distinguishable from senators, except that they were not able, or often did not want, to pursue the official senatorial career; though there were many knights who saw themselves as considerably superior to the run-of-the-mill senator.

However, that is not really MacMullen's theme. Prosopographers and political historians have done justice to this social structure at the top. When MacMullen writes about Julius Caesar, "it is the following as much as his leading that makes the moment." It may seem at first sight that he is following in these scholars' tracks. But not so:

Within the inner circle of Caesar's staff and friends or of their equivalent at other periods in Roman history, the historian looks around quite at his ease, confident that he understands pretty well what made people tick. He understands, that is, the senate and the equestrian class. Social relations connecting them with the remaining 99 per cent of the population are little known and little investigated.

Very true, and this book is an admirable endeavour to fill the vacuum. But MacMullen ends it with an interesting question, preceded by two apparently contradictory quotations: "not everything deserves narration that goes on the favour of the lower orders" (Amianus Marcellinus); and "I can hardly be persuaded that it is perfectly legitimate to describe a

state, without first having tried to analyse the society on which it rests" (Marc Bloch). MacMullen asks: which of these two views shall we follow? And I am sure that his answer is Bloch's.

Yet both views are correct, and they are not so contradictory after all. Obviously Bloch is right to say that it is incumbent upon us to analyse the social components of any community that we happen to be studying. But the point Amianus is trying to make is equally worthy of consideration. That is to say, when we have finished analysing Roman society and have in the process done it elements, we must beware of going on to suppose that these elements necessarily or frequently influenced the course of events in society like Rome's, the course of events was decided by the "minutiae" but extraordinarily prominent "group at the top."

Indeed, quite a large part of the decision-making was frequently performed by one man at the top: the emperor. To point this out is not *à la mode*, at a time when there is greater emphasis on group influences. Nevertheless, if you go through the list of emperors, it will be possible to identify quite a number who did, in their own persons, change the direction of events. If this sort of thing did not happen, why does it seem so important to millions to know and decide, who is going to be the next president of the United States?

As to the president's relation with his society, he like the Roman emperor has to modify his decision-making so as not to alienate the small group at the top. And not content, as the emperor was, to ingratiate himself with the urban mob, he has to show more sympathy with the rural poor than emperors ever did. Nevertheless, in one respect the poor or relatively poor got a hearing from Rome for which no real modern parallel exists, at least in America or any of western Europe. That is to say, the emperors were aware every day of the lives that they had to keep the favour of the army, which at times went on camp to represent a "middle" and progressively "lower" order of society.

To hold the maestro's hand

By Samuel Lipman

HALINA RODZINSKI:
Our Two Lives
403pp. New York: Scribner's. \$12.50.

This book is about two people—Arthur Rodzinski, a great musician who was a difficult man, and the wife who stayed at his side despite his many provocations. It is concerned with both the career and the man, and with the conditions of living which his talent as well as his neurotic instability forced upon him to endure. To place all this in context, Halina Rodzinski begins with an extended description of the Polish society in which she was born. The first time she was born in 1906, when she was engaged to share the coming season of the Philharmonic with John Barbirolli, with the position of conductor to go to the winner; but Barbirolli got the job before Rodzinski had a chance to conduct his concert. The second opportunity in New York came when his friend Toscanini asked Rodzinski to select and train the new NBC Symphony Orchestra, which David Sarnoff was creating for the maestro; but here once again disappointment followed initial hopes, for the NBC management skillfully eased him out of most of the concerts he had been promised.

But now with the leadership of the Philharmonic, Rodzinski got off to a bad start even before his first season began. Thinking that he had absolute musical control over the orchestra, and aware that one of the reasons he had been hired was to purge the orchestra of apathetic and incompetent players, he gave notice that he intended to dismiss fourteen players, including the concertmaster and six first-desk men. When the news was made public, it shocked the musical community and jeopardized the livelihood of brother musicians. The matter was soon settled, and Rodzinski won. But the lasting damage lay not in his relations with the orchestra, but rather in his bitterness over the lack of support he felt he had received in the matter from a post he had occupied since 1927. It was in Los Angeles, where Halina went to be with him, that she met and had tea with the soon-to-be-discarded wife. After his divorce, though Rodzinski seemed devoted to Halina, he was reluctant to go through with the marriage case, and 1947 after four seasons of notable artistic and public success.

This attractive Pole she now fell in love with was ten years older than she, already an established conductor in the United States—and herself a talented musician and an important influence on his musical development. In 1932, Rodzinski still had one year to go as conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, a post he had occupied since 1927. It was in Los Angeles, where Halina went to be with him, that she met and had tea with the soon-to-be-discarded wife. After his divorce, though Rodzinski seemed devoted to Halina, he was reluctant to go through with the marriage case, and 1947 after four seasons of notable artistic and public success.

realities of immigration law won out, and they were married in 1934 in time for her to return with him to the United States, where he was about to begin his second season as conductor of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra. Here, hardly encouraged by her husband's doubts as to her suitability to be a conductor's wife, she began to learn to deal with board members, orchestra wives, reporters—and officially to care for her husband and deal with his problems.

Rodzinski stayed as conductor in Cleveland until 1943, when mounting difficulties with the Cleveland Orchestra's board of directors coincided with an offer from the New York Philharmonic to become its music director—a title implying more power than that of a mere conductor. Rodzinski had twice before seemed on the verge of leaving Cleveland, but each time he had been engaged to share the coming season of the Philharmonic with John Barbirolli, with the position of conductor to go to the winner; but Barbirolli got the job before Rodzinski had a chance to conduct his concert. The second opportunity in New York came when his friend Toscanini asked Rodzinski to select and train the new NBC Symphony Orchestra, which David Sarnoff was creating for the maestro; but here once again disappointment followed initial hopes, for the NBC management skillfully eased him out of most of the concerts he had been promised.

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The career of Arthur Rodzinski has so far escaped the attention it deserves, and what this book has to say about him provides welcome information. This is all the more true because at the time of his recent death good taste seemed to regard him as a man of the past. The manager of both the New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra, a major stockholder in the Columbia Broadcasting System (the owner of American Columbia Records), and leader of Columbia Concerts Corporation, Rodzinski was, for almost thirty years, one of the most powerful figures in American music management. He loved power and used this power to make money; he employed as far as possible those artists who were his commercial favourites. Rodzinski was not one of those, and his wife is surely to be believed when she describes Judson's efforts to hurt her husband's career, and of his collecting commissions (as Rodzinski's personal manager) on engagements which Judson had done his best to deny Rodzinski. Her description of Judson's commercial practices and the level of his musical taste and knowledge may be read as a useful addition to Howard Shuman's account of Judson's relation to the orchestra in his recent (1975) history of the New York Philharmonic.

Fortunately for Rodzinski, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which had long desired his services, came along with an offer at the time his leaving the Philharmonic became unavoidable. But here again his sense of overestimated himself, and his spread favourable comment, was insecure. He stayed in Chicago only one season, for once again conflict with the board arose; and this time Rodzinski found himself formally charged with exceeding his budget, substituting operas for symphonies, and demanding a long-term contract. In reality he was fired for resisting the interference of the board in musical matters. He was never again to have a permanent post. During the last ten years of his life he was a touring guest conductor, winning perhaps his greatest successes in Italy with his performances of operas, among them *Tristan und Isolde*, *Boris Godunov*, *Pierre Donizetti*, and *Verdi's Otello*. These final years make a sad story, tenderly described by his wife, of increasing artistic powers and progressive heart disease, culminating shortly before his death in the achievement of a purified and undisturbed physical conditions of debility and exhaustion.

Rodzinski never achieved the kind of general public fame which would have enabled recording a large part

of his repertoire. Though he recorded some important pieces in each of his major posts, none—with the exception of the excerpts from *Die Walküre*, which he made for Columbia in New York with Helen Traubel in the mid-1940s—remains in the American catalogue; of the stereo recordings he made in London for EMI at the end of his life all three discs remain available. In the United States, one of Richard Strauss, one of Spanish and one of Russian pieces. The evidence of the Wagner records alone fully supports the contemporary opinion of his conducting as being at the same time both emotional and finely controlled, concerned with large structure as well as small nuances. His repertoire was admirably wide, embracing virtually all of the music of the nineteenth century and much—especially post-revolutionary Russian—music of his time. His was certainly a vast catholic repertoire rather than that of his more famous contemporaries Toscanini, Walter, and Furtwängler.

Running through this story of artistic success and commercial frustration is a parallel tale of an often happy marriage combined with bitterness, emotional disturbance, infidelity, and often cruelty. He could be charming when his turbulent feelings allowed him to be, and though it must be said that his relations with his orchestra musicians were marked by mutual respect and not infrequently by close friendship, he tended to react to career difficulties by rigidity and increased self-isolation. Shortly after their marriage, Rodzinski left his Halina no doubt as to her position by telling her "I come before everything and everyone else." She found this man who could publicly be so forceful and privately so insecure, a hypochondriac, tormented by shyness, anxiety, and self-doubt. She was forced, at his whim, to be mother and lover, nurse and companion. He had many love affairs during his marriage; he expected to be forgiven—forgiveness which he was never given—because he was a man of uncontrolled enthusiasms which he attempted to force on others; these ranged from a quixotic scheme to raise goats commercially for milk to an evangelistic involvement in Moral Re-orientation. His superstitiousness connected with musical performance were many and bizarre, as in his insistence on carrying a loaded revolver in his pocket. And one cannot help sensing that his wife has given us only a few examples of his often heedless, cruel behaviour toward her. Upon

the evidence of *Our Two Lives* it is plain that she loved her husband both as a musician and as a man, and whose failings she was fully conscious.

But if that were all there were to this book, it would be little more than an often interesting demonstration of the common idea that artists are peculiar persons indeed. What is so striking about Mrs. Rodzinski's book is that in integrating her story so well she has managed to show how all her husband's traits, the good and the bad, the artistic and the personal, were commingled, and how much of his musical life was of a piece with his personality. She understands more than others who have been similarly close to great artists how public musical performance exerts an almost unbearable strain upon even the most talented and vital people, and how the consequence of that strain is inevitable suffering for the artist and those involved with him. She sees clearly how that obsessional preparation which produces the most finely realized performances carries over into daily life, making that life unbearable for the artist's family, and she sees how that irrational need for praise which drives artists to the greatest risks and highest accomplishments also makes them require a kind and amount of love which no spouse can fully provide. And she also seems to understand how rarely one becomes a great performer as a normal part of the healthy development of a harmonious personality.

Less than twenty years after his death it seemed that the name of Arthur Rodzinski had become little more than an extended footnote in American orchestral history. Though he occupied some of the most important places in American musical life, was always excellent newspaper copy, and enjoyed an unwavering high musical reputation, his career can only be counted a limited success. Other conductors of even more difficult personality have had greater careers, as have conductors of clearly less ability. Musical success, after all, is also a matter of luck and the times, and Rodzinski was neither terribly lucky nor gifted with the easy relationship to great events which so marked the lives of Bruno Walter and Arturo Toscanini. Exactly why he was not more successful remains unclear, and it would be unfair to expect Mrs. Rodzinski to provide a clear answer. What is clear, however, is that by writing this extraordinary memoir of her husband and their life together, she has preserved his memory—a service perhaps greater than many she so generously rendered him during his stormy life. She has done this, one is happy to say, by telling the truth.

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

Up and down the social scale

By Alan Cuckston

CYRIL EHRLICH:
The Piano
254pp. Dent. £6.95.

Standard reference works on the piano usually say that its history culminates in the middle of the nineteenth century, when it was supposed to have attained its modern form in all important particulars. It may be that this notion, which currency because Rosamund Haring's definitive work on the history of the instrument (published in 1933) finished at the Great Exhibition. But it is more likely that the blinkered views of A. J. Hipkins against technical progress have been perpetuated down to the present day. For, as Cyril Ehrlich points out, Hipkins's publications have enormously influenced the historiography of the piano in England; Hipkins was at Broadwood's, and his antipathy towards new technology adopted by the Americans and Germans, like Steinway and Bechstein, in the second half of the nineteenth century, was widely publicized.

In his chapter on the Victorian piano Professor Ehrlich reveals that like most of the 1851 exhibits, the piano was a product of pre-industrial manufacture. Broadwood's work force of 300 to 400 undertook every operation, starting with the raw materials of timber and metal (in which large capital sums were tied up) and working

through to the finished product. The labour of forty-two operations, or "mysteries" was strictly divided between individual craftsmen, but it achieved an annual productivity of only about seven pianos per man. Progress in the mechanization of woodworking had stood still since the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and machinery was remarkable for its absence in piano-making.

Professor Ehrlich gives due recognition to the fact that the role of the American piano industry as a pace-maker of business organization and technology was an extraordinary achievement at this time. "In 1903 the Steinway family business founded in New York. It created a tradition of development and research which was without parallel in the industry's history. The Steinways may have been the first to use many features, using machine-tools and assembling interchangeable parts on a large scale. Over a period of thirty years Steinway registered fifty-five patents, most of them substantial technical advances, not mere eccentric ingenuities. Theodore Steinway's practical achievements, which included the duplex scale and overstringing, were praised by no less a scientist than Hermann Helmholtz, the acknowledged progenitor of modern acoustics."

The marketing techniques of Theodore's young brother William are noted, an image of the producer, which associated only with high quality. But, as the author includes, the success of the Steinway piano was not due to the marketing techniques of Theodore Steinway, but to the quality of the piano at the great international

exhibitions. These latter occasions were at once arenas for gladiatorial combat, and meeting places for the diffusion of the latest technological developments. They also undoubtedly assisted Steinway's conquest of Europe, where the instruments were immediately copied.

The first European makers to realize the absolute superiority of the American system were the Germans, who, within a few years, exerted an enormous commercial thrust. "The conquest of the European market at this time," says Ehrlich, "was the result of their technical and commercial achievements attached to their pianos, captured enormous new markets in Britain and Australia proved to be the largest markets for German pianos."

By 1910 there was one piano in this country for every ten to twenty people. The piano-purchasing power of working-class incomes had approximately doubled since 1850, and the instruments they could afford to buy were much improved. Professor Ehrlich is excellent and entertaining on the elevation of the piano to its extraordinary place in Victorian society. Status, achievement, respectability, were all present in the piano symbol.

The English adoption of the American system did not take place until after the First World War. But by that time the market forces, sary for its successful exploitation, was to disintegrate in the lack of alternative instruments—gramophones and wireless—and the consequent stagnation of the piano market.

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CASSELL

from a book—most noticeably in this
made landscape. The swan on the canal
with nine cygnets, is the *Home Plover*, 1936.

Ezekiel in church: shall these bones live?
Ramsholt's pheasants live another month,
then go plumply down. A nightingale sings
politely through the dangerous summer.

Peter Porter

When Charles Darwin in old age looked back on his education at Cambridge half a century earlier, he had this to say about Paley's *Evidence of Christianity*, a required part of the examination syllabus:

"The logic of this book and, as I may add of his *Natural Theology*, were as much delight as did Euclid. The careful study of these works, without attempting to learn any part by rote, was the only part of the Academic Course which, as I then felt and as I still believe, was of the least use to me in the education of my mind."

Paley's reputation and influence in the nineteenth century were enormous, as D. L. LeMahieu reminds us in the closing chapter of his excellent study, and it is illuminating as well as ironic that Darwin, who did more than anyone else to discredit "natural religion", should have felt such a debt to its greatest exponent.

One of the theses of the book is that natural religion was the cornerstone of the British Enlightenment and represented a consensus to which both Christians (who added as it revealed religion) and Deists (who took it next) subscribed. With the important exception of Hume, whose *Dialogues* concerning *Natural Religion* argued devastatingly against every feature of the religious consensus, few eighteenth-century writers questioned that the evidence of God could be established through rational examination of nature, or that the results of such examination constituted a "natural" and therefore universal basis for religion. It was Archdeacon Paley who, first as a Cambridge lecturer and later in a series of books, contained in *Natural Theology* (1802), gave the fullest, clearest and most nearly convincing expression to this consensus.

Natural theology based itself on the ancient argument from design, according to which the existence of a rational and creative God was evident from the presence of purpose in nature. The eye was clearly intended for seeing, the ear for hearing, the wings of a bird for flying; hence they must have been created

More by design than accident

By Christopher Clausen

D. L. LEMAHIEU:
The Mind of William Paley: A Philosopher and his Age
215pp. University of Nebraska Press, (AUPG). £9.10.

by an intelligent being. One reason Hume made little headway in criticizing this notion was that seventeenth and eighteenth-century science lent strength and intellectual respectability that it had not previously possessed.

Enlightenment science, whose guiding principles were laid down by physicists and astronomers, presented a mechanical model of the world. A watch implied a watchmaker, in the famous and hackneyed metaphor; how could a world which was revealing such ordered complexity to science be without a creator? Voltaire ridiculed the argument by having Dr Pangloss assert that the nose was clearly designed to support spectacles, but so long as science posited a nature that was static and mechanical, there was little possibility of conflict between it and natural religion.

As Dr LeMahieu points out, the argument from design was never intended to provide a rational basis for religion, rather it gave rational support to what was already believed on non-rational grounds. Paley seems to have regarded his major work as a sort of inoculation against doubt by being Christian. Thus, while natural theology suffered from logical flaws that are obvious to the modern reader, the Romantic criticism that eighteenth-century religion was coldly logical and lacking in emotional depth was misconceived. Enlightenment orthodoxy, discredited by "enthusiasm", it did not, however, separate rational from devotional religion to anything like the degree that the post-Darwinian century has done.

In Paley's words, the argument from design made of the world a temple, "and life itself one continued act of adoration. The change

is no less than this: that, whereas formerly God was seldom in our thoughts, we can now scarcely look upon anything without perceiving its relation to him." Religious emotion was there; but expressing emotion publicly was not the philosopher's business. His purpose was rather to erect logical walls around the house of faith. So long as those walls stood there would be no conflict between reason and feeling, or between science and religion. If they fell, consensus would be at an end, imperilling not only the public peace but the very unity of the self. The results of natural theology's failure would be culturally disastrous. No wonder Hume had little following.

What finally demolished natural religion was not its logical inadequacies but the progress of science. It is ironic that the mechanical model of the universe which had served a largely agrarian era so well should have given way to an organic one at the very moment when the machine was coming to dominate English economic life, and that the students of humble plants and animals should have toppled the edifice that Newton helped erect. The theory of evolution was not simply because it cast doubt on Moses but because it made the argument from design untenable and discredited the major rational argument for belief in God. Henceforth Christianity would become more and

more the property of the enthusiasts, the fundamentalists and the unwashed; rational religion would become a weaker and weaker force with fewer and fewer adherents. The religious crises of the Victorians and the decline of the more sophisticated forms of Protestantism in the twentieth century are among the many consequences of Paley's failure.

The scientists did not, of course, see themselves as wreckers but rather as liberators. Even before Darwin they had largely freed themselves from dependence on final causes either as a principle of explanation or as a necessary justification for science itself. Nineteenth-century science entered the whole notion of belief as well as the structure of things that a rational man would necessarily believe in; it made for tentative conclusions and the suspension of judgment into moral virtues. The whole idea of faith became dubious; so did the unbridled rationalism that had allowed a Paley to be so certain about so many things.

In 1830 J. F. W. Herschel asserted that "The Character of the true philosopher is so devoid of all things not impossible, and to believe all things not unreasonable." Paley, explaining the meaning and virtues of agnosticism, demanded, "Why should anybody be called upon to say how he knows that which he does not know? . . . In matters of the intellect do not pretend that conclusions are certain which are not demonstrated or demonstrable." Thus the humble admission that one did not know was presented as morally superior to the neo-Platonic certainties of a Paley; Hume was vindicated, and

the intellectual confidence of the Enlightenment was re-evaluated in another variety of human pride and credulity.

A conservative social philosophy was one of the concomitants of natural theology in England, of which LeMahieu devotes a lengthy chapter to the Paley's ethical and political writings. Paley's ethics as "that science which teaches men their duty, and the reasons of it"; utility, or expediency, was the standard by which duties should be determined. Sexual intercourse prior to marriage was wrong because "the rule of the species will not underlie the encumbrance, expense, and restraint of married life, if they can gratify their passions at a cheaper price." Private property was right because, among other things, it increased productivity. Imposing the death penalty for the stealing of livestock was right because "property being more exposed, requires the terror of capital punishment to protect it."

In 1792 Paley published a reply to Paine's "Rights of Man" in which he reassured the poor that the laws which accidentally gave enormous estates into one man's possession are, after all, the same laws which protect and guard the poor man. The same argument from design that demonstrated the truth of religion also showed the rightness of existing social arrangements; everything could be seen to be designed for its purpose and therefore not only useful but divinely ordained. The natural and the social were of a piece and one examined them with sufficient care.

The eighteenth-century mind is so remote to us as that of ancient Rome, and in Paley we see it at its most systematic, if not at its most profound. If that century by its large seems shallow to us, at least it had the virtues as well as the defects of order and coherence. In *The Mind of William Paley* Dr LeMahieu has done a service in transmitting some of the intellectual sources of that order to us with clarity and conviction. It is a tribute to his industry, for he gives us not only Paley but also his relevant predecessors and contemporaries, always lucidly and patiently.

The Orthodox Churches and the West, edited by Derek Baker (300pp. Oxford: Blackwell, £10). Volume 13 of the *Studies in Church History* series, and consists of twenty papers read at the Ecclesiological Society in 1975. They cover various topics from the fourth to the present century; and some of them show a welcome broadening of perspective in a field which is attracting increasing interest.

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Back to AD 70

By Anthony Hanson

JOHN A. T. ROBINSON:
Rethinking the New Testament
369pp. SCM. £8.50.

It is possible to speak of a general consensus of scholars today about the approximate dates at which the various books of the New Testament were written. Most experts would agree that the earliest documents are the authentic Pauline Epistles, and that they are to be dated between AD 50 and 60. This excludes Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles, which would be put at about 80 and 100 respectively. After the Paulines comes Mark's Gospel, probably just before AD 70. Matthew and Luke-Acts would be put in the period 80-90. There is much less agreement about 1 Peter, which some would date fairly early, but some on the other hand as late as Trajan's reign, about 117. Nearly everyone would put Jude and 11 Peter two epistles which contain no datable material, probably late, perhaps very well into the first half of the second century. This leaves James and the Johannine Epistles. There is no agreed date about James, and the Johannines are usually dated by their connection with the Fourth Gospel.

It is necessary to set out in some detail the prevailing view so that we can appreciate the shock which J. A. T. Robinson is administering to received opinion when he maintains, as he does in this book, that every single one of the documents in the New Testament was completed and published before AD 70. His great argument, one which certainly deserves due attention, is that if most of the books in the New Testament were written after AD 70 they must have shown unmistakable signs of the event which took place in AD 70, the sack of Jerusalem by the Romans. An event fraught with such momentous historical and theological consequences, he says, must have left its mark on any Christian writing produced in the decades that followed. But in fact we find no such unmistakable references. He begins by showing with much reasonableness that there is nothing in Mark's Gospel which suggests knowledge of the fall of Jerusalem. He goes on to argue that the passages in Luke-Acts and

Matthew which are usually taken as veiled references to this event can be better explained as echoes of Old Testament prophecies and descriptions of the sack of cities. Next he turns to the Pauline Epistles: here he gives us a carefully documented account of Paul's life with suggested dating. He has to argue that those epistles which many critics regard as deuteropauline are in fact authentic, Colossians, Ephesians, and the three Pastoral Epistles. There follows a consideration of 1 Peter which he thinks contains two homilies of Peter addressed to Christians in Rome who were facing Nero's persecution. The material was put together and sent to Peter's converts in Asia Minor round about the time of Peter's martyrdom. Hebrews he puts just before 70, written perhaps by Barnabas to a group of Jewish Christians in Rome.

The Apocalypse, he says, was inspired, not by an alleged persecution in Domitian's reign (for which there is no evidence), but by the events of the "year of the three emperors", AD 68-69, in the course of which four claimants to the empire were killed and Rome was stormed by the troops of the victorious Vespasian. Most astonishing of all, Robinson argues strongly that the Fourth Gospel is as good a source of historical evidence for Jesus' life as any of the other three, that it was written in the fifties and sixties, and that it was written by the apostle John—a position defended by almost no reputable British scholars since the time of the great Wescott. In deploying his arguments J. A. T. Robinson shows a very remarkable tendency to revert to the evidence already put forward by scholars of sixty or seventy years ago, which, he claims, has never been disproved, only ignored. Among these the great Adolf von Harnack is one of the most often quoted, but Robinson is also anxious to vindicate some scholars who, he alleges, have been unjustly forgotten, notably an interesting man called G. Edmundson, who at the age of sixty-five delivered the Bampton Lectures in 1852 at the Church in Rome in the First Century, and whose originality and insight deserved a better fate than that his book should have been swamped by the First World War.

Robinson's book cannot be ignored. It may even be a portent that the long reign of the Two-Document Theory may be coming to an end. This is the theory that behind the first three gospels lie two documents: the first is Mark's Gospel,

which, the theory holds, was incorporated almost entire in their respective gospels by Luke and "Matthew". The second document is Q, a collection of sayings of Jesus about Jesus which was used by Luke and "Matthew", but not (apparently) by Mark. Robinson does not deny that Mark is the earliest gospel to be written, but he does maintain that a simple theory of incorporation by Luke and "Matthew" severely will not do. It is not at all certain that either Luke or "Matthew" had any version of Mark before them. The few but significant occasions on which Luke and "Matthew" agree against Mark in their account of an incident described by all three evangelists make one ask whether all three were not in fact using some other older gospel. The whole question of the written sources behind the gospels is more complicated than most scholars today like to admit. Here I think Robinson is on very firm ground: it is astonishing to observe how much of modern criticism is based on the Two-Document Theory. This is true of a vast amount of form criticism; how can you penetrate to the original shape of the material found in the gospels if you are actually mistaken as to which is the earliest extant written version? It is the same with what is called redaction criticism, the attempt to discover the theological and cultural presuppositions of the gospel writers by examining how they have edited ("redacted") their material. As far as I know, all redaction critics begin by considering how Luke or "Matthew" has altered the Marcan narrative. But if we are not sure whether it really was the Marcan narrative which they had in front of them, how can we even begin this particular operation? This Robinson brings out very well.

Similarly he impresses me when he deals with the dating of the authentic Pauline Epistles. He is very well read indeed and puts the evidence clearly and forcibly in front of his readers. He has very much to think again about Hebrews and the Apocalypse. It is extraordinarily difficult to find any sort of contemporary reference in Hebrews, and certainly, if the Temple had been destroyed at the time of its writing, one would expect a reference to it. Apart from anything else, the catastrophe would have greatly strengthened the author's argument. There is much to be said for putting Revelation at the time of the fall of Jerusalem, but Robinson's argument, though the absence of any evidence that Nero's persecution was reproduced in Asia Minor is a difficulty here. But it must be added in all honesty that

there is just as little evidence that there was any persecution in Asia Minor in the reign of Domitian.

But at certain points I confess that I am completely convinced by Robinson's arguments. I find it hard to believe that Luke and 20 does not betray a knowledge of the sack of Jerusalem. But when you see Jerusalem circled by armies, then you may be sure that her destruction is near. But this means that Luke must be placed in the seventies or eighties and Acts even later. Nor can I believe that Paul wrote Ephesians; it is indeed an admirable epistle, full of profound Christian thought, and the author was certainly nourished in the same tradition of biblical exegesis as Paul was. But I do not think the style is Pauline, and it does seem to be somewhat farther away in perspective from the saving events than Paul was. As for Dr Robinson's treatment of that low-water mark in New Testament insight, the Epistles of Jude and 11 Peter, I cannot understand how any well-informed scholar can put them so early. Here I must say I think Robinson's arguments are obscure and confusing. He certainly does not go so far as to maintain that the apostle Peter wrote 11 Peter, but he argues for some sort of a link: Jude was Peter's assistant in his mission in Asia Minor, who stayed on after Peter left for Rome, and produced (in circumstances not at all clear to me) the two linked epistles which we know as Jude and 11 Peter. It is at this point that Robinson also seems to have reached his low-water mark. His arguments here (and indeed in many others) will not be used by avowed conservatives,

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